

the National Association of Veterans Homes and the 119 State Veterans Homes represented by that association for their contributions to the health care of veterans and the health care system of the Nation.

Ambrosio Guillen State Veterans Nursing Home opened its doors in my Congressional District of El Paso, TX on July 19, 2005, as the first veterans nursing home to be located in a major Texas metropolitan area. This 160-bed home has exhibited a great commitment to caring for those who have honorably served our country.

I am proud to join in the bi-partisan support shown by the House of Representatives as we honor the National Association of Veterans Homes.

Madam Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in supporting all those who dedicate themselves to serving our veterans by voting in favor of H. Con. Res. 347.

TRIBUTE TO NASA MISSION STS-121

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 28, 2006

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, we have all suffered setbacks in our lives. For most of us, millions of people are not watching as monumental tragedy unfolds in a matter of seconds.

This was the case for family and friends of the astronauts who tragically died in the Columbia Shuttle disaster in 2003. In that instant, the folks at NASA lost their friends and co-workers in the Space Shuttle Columbia tragedy. It was a moment they will never forget. It was a moment that has created great sorrow and an intense pressure for perfect missions.

NASA employees, have vowed to use hard work and determination, to never again make the same mistakes. It is with that determination that they completed their second journey into space after Columbia, and it was a perfect mission.

Today I congratulate all seven members of the STS-121 mission, and the countless men and women who supported them throughout their successful 13-day, five million-mile journey. This second successful space mission since the Columbia tragedy, marks the new standard of success NASA has resolved to meet and exceed.

The Commander of STS-121, Col. Steve Lindsey was also mission commander on a space flight in 2001. He flew as pilot on 2 previous shuttle missions, and he has logged more than 1,000 hours in space. A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, and the Air Force Institute of Technology he has been the recipient of many awards and medals, including the Distinguished Flying Cross, three NASA Space Flight Medals, the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, and the NASA Exceptional Service Medal. He and his wife Diane have three children.

Pilot Mark Kelly has logged 12 days in space. His dream to become an astronaut started with Alan Shepard, the first American to fly into space. A graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, he flew 39 combat missions in Operation Desert Storm. He has logged over 4,000 flight hours in more than 50 different aircraft and has served as a pilot on

STS-108. With this latest mission, he has logged almost 25 days in space. He is also the father of two children.

Mission Specialist Michael Fossum, wasn't always an astronaut. Before riding into the heavens he was a NASA Systems Engineer, charged with evaluating the use of the Russian Soyuz spacecraft as a viable emergency escape vehicle for the space station. He also represented the Flight Crew Operations Directorate during the redesign of the International Space Station. Once a Capsule Communicator, CAPCOM, in Mission Control, Fossum was able to log more than 306 hours in space during STS-121. He and his wife Melanie have four children.

Mission Specialist Lisa Nowak, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, made her first space flight on STS-121. She also logged 13 days of space flight time. A former Mission Commander and EW Lead of the Electronic Warfare Aggressor Squadron 34, she also worked in the Astronaut Office Robotics Branch and in NASA Mission Control as prime communicator with on-orbit crews. She and her husband have three children.

A Harvard graduate, Stephanie Wilson served as an astronaut on STS-121, her first mission into space. She has completed extensive research on controlling and modeling large, flexible space structures. She has worked for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, and was a member of the Attitude and Articulation Control Subsystem for the Galileo spacecraft. After working in Mission Control Wilson worked in the Astronaut Office Shuttle Operations Branch, with the Space Shuttle Main Engines, External Tank and Solid Rocket Boosters.

Mission Specialist Piers Sellers is an expert on how the Earth's biosphere and atmosphere interact. His studies have included computer modeling of the climate system, satellite remote sensing studies and climatological field work coordinating aircraft, satellites and ground teams across the world. Sellers also worked part time in Moscow as a technical liaison on ISS computer software. This is his second mission and he has logged more than 559 hours in space, and 6 spacewalks. He and his wife have two children.

Finally, Mission Specialist Thomas Reiter, of Germany is the only astronaut to stay in space during STS-121. He will live aboard the International Space Station and return to Earth aboard Shuttle mission STS-116 or a Russian Soyuz in a few months. He has trained as a cosmonaut and was also involved in European Space Agency, ESA, studies of manned space vehicles and the development of equipment for the International Space Station. He and Russian colleagues were on the crew of ESA-Russian Euromir 95 mission to the Mir Space Station. Reiter was the on-board engineer for the record-breaking 179-day mission. He performed some 40 European scientific experiments and performed two spacewalks. He and his wife have two sons.

Each astronaut on this mission and the countless people who supported them accomplished great tasks, to help our space program move forward, in characteristic giant steps.

NASA equipped this shuttle with more cameras to improve views and data from all angles of the shuttle during and after launch. Piers Sellers and Mike Fossum performed spacewalks to test equipment, remove and replace power, command and data cables on

International Space Station equipment. They also tested techniques for inspecting and repairing the Shuttle mid-flight while also successfully transferring 14 tons of equipment to the ISS.

Mr. Speaker today I congratulate the NASA space program for enduring great tragedy, and turning it into a monumental success, again. They are doing what we all hope to have the strength and power to do during times of great adversity, they are facing the challenge and then conquering it.

I wish everyone involved in our space program the very best as they embark on future missions which will no doubt, continue to change our country for the better. That's Just the Way It Is.

HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROMOTION ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. RON KIND

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 27, 2006

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4157) to amend the Social Security Act to encourage the dissemination, security, confidentiality, and usefulness of health information technology;

Mr. KIND. Mr. Chairman, I rise in appreciation that House Leadership has at last brought a health information technology bill to the floor. As a cochair of the New Democrat Coalition, I have been a long-time supporter of health IT. I believe health IT, if done correctly, will highlight the need for personal accountability in health care, advance technological innovation, promote fiscal responsibility and, most importantly, improve health and save lives. Additionally, great strides can be made in homeland security as well as tracking disease and infection.

I am pleased that H.R. 4157 will codify in law the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology and that the coordinator will be tasked with devising a national strategic plan for implementing health IT. Additionally, the grant money authorized by the bill is a worthwhile, if small, step in the right direction. Representing western Wisconsin, I know too well how difficult it is for small medical practices to afford the purchase and upkeep of software and hardware needed for electronic medical records. The \$5 million in grants to rural or underserved urban areas is the first of many such grants Congress must facilitate.

While I am pleased the bill is moving forward, I am disappointed that negotiations were not done in a more bipartisan manner. It is good to see that harmful and invasive policies on privacy issues were removed from the bill, and I am hopeful that when the House and Senate meet in conference, members will take a hard look at strengthening further the bill's privacy provisions.

Mr. Chairman, I plan on voting for this health IT bill and look forward to working with the Senate on improving it. America's doctors, nurses, and patients deserve 21st century technology in the health care system, and it is past time for Congress to be acting on this issue.